

SOME REASONS
FOR THINKING, THAT THE
GREEK LANGUAGE
WAS BORROWED FROM THE
CHINESE:
IN NOTES
ON
THE GRAMMATICA SINICA
OF
MONS. FOURMONT.

BY MR. WEBB.

DELECTANT, FATEOR, INVENTÆ ORIGINATIONES, ET
SPECIE ACUMINIS CAPIUNT ET DETINENT.

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P R E F A C E.

THE splendor of the Greek language compared with the poverty of the Chinese, the distance of the countries from each other, and the silence of History concerning any communication between them, will be early objections, in the minds of my readers, to the following hypothesis.

The first of these is easily dismissed; the greatest things must have small beginnings; Hercules, as well as Hylas, was rocked in a cradle.

As to the rest—What do we know of the migrations and intercourse of men, previous to the commencement of the Greek annals; an era of yesterday, when we reflect on the probable age of the world?

Who were the Pelasgi, and whence? Asiatics, most certainly; and this is all that we

know of their origin: a circumstance which makes it probable that they came from the most distant parts of Asia.

The Egyptians and Indians worshipped a cow: they distinguished the signs of the Zodiac by the figures of the same animals: they had many other points of agreement. Are we to call in question the facts, because we have no records of the commerce that produced them?

Our first historians were Greeks, remarkable for their inattention to the origin of things; or, which is the same thing, for the vanity of assuming all inventions to themselves. Had they known and acknowledged the history of Moses, they would have set up the Greek, at its highest refinement, for the language of Adam: so ignorant or so careless were they in this matter, that they knew not the roots of their own tongue: those roots were not natives; and no wonder*

** Plato, in his Cratylus, undertakes to explain the nature of language. How? By compounding a number of Greek compounds: the task was easy enough; especially with the latitude of construction assumed by him. But, the moment he is called upon to account for a simple root, he declares himself quite at a loss; and, not knowing which*

way

wonder they should overlook them in the derivatives and beauties of their own creation.

Lipſius diſcovered, not many years ago, a ſtriking affinity between the old Perſic and the German language *. The learned were amazed —The wonder is, that it was not diſcovered much ſooner. There is not ſo great a difference in languages as is generally thought: the caſe is, the difference is on the ſurface; the agreement, like Truth, is at the bottom of the well.

Bochart has given us a journal of the travels of the Hebrew, far exceeding what I attribute in this way to the Chineſe. After all, what is diſtance on ſuch a ſpot as this earth of ours! † that which an individual may go round

way to turn him in his own, refers the enquirer to the ſimpler, or, as he calls them, the barbarous languages. This, indeed, was to begin at the wrong end.

Happily for the Engliſh language, and in ſome reſpects for language in general, our ſenſible Mr. Horne takes the oppoſite courſe.

* Vide Lipſii Epift. ad Belgas.

† Les Chinois dans la plus profonde antiquité ſe ſervoient de cordelettes nouées en guiſe d'écriture—

On ne peut qu'être fort ſurpris de trouver une manière d'écrire ſi extraordinaire à la Chine, en Egypte, au Perou.—Freret, Mem. de l'Acad. tome vi. p. 609.

in little more than twelve months, might not colonies have compassed in the succession of ages?

In cultivated life societies are stationary; they grow fond and proud of their own improvements: in an unimproved state mankind are wanderers; the shepherd and hunter are, what the philosopher affects to be, citizens of the world. Happily, the period is within record, at which our parents came down from the rocks of the North; and their language is now hissing on the banks of the Ganges. The spirit of trade has renewed our earliest habits, and brought us round to that East, from whence we set out.

I now come to what would have answered my purpose at the beginning, could I have hoped to obtain it without conditions: I mean, to request of the reader, that he would take up my essay in a spirit of candor; and bear what I have to say, without prejudice or affection.

REASONS,

REASONS, &c.

ON entering into the subject before us, it may not be amiss to cast our eye on a sketch of the Chinese language. My Author gives it in the following manner :

Apud gentes cæteras syllabæ sunt utrinque, id est, ita ut, inter vocales consonis adjungendas, vocalis nunc præcedat, nunc sequatur ; et vice versa.

Sed apud Sinas ordinatio omnino alia.

1°. Voces sunt monosyllabæ omnes.



If a single stroke of the organ could form the sign that was wanted, it was enough : necessity invents no more than is necessary.

Derivatives and compounds would run into polysyllables; the Chinese have neither: to give a new sign to every new idea, was the lesson of Nature.

It is rather a pretty than a sound idea, that language had its origin in imitation: it is not considered, that articulations can imitate no other than ideas of sound and motion. What was to be done with the rest?

In the early stage of a process of this kind, the passing from one principle to another was less likely to take place than the first invention of words. Upon the whole, when we reflect how difficult at all times it is to bring men to agree in their conceptions of resemblance, we must recur to signs of institution, concerning which there could have been no difference of opinions.

2°. *A consona incipiunt omnes, a vocali nunquam.*



It was the giving sound to the consonant that produced the distinctions of vowels, which are the modifications of the first oral sound—*a* ; as in *ma*, *pa*, passing into the subdivisions—*me*, *mi*, *mo*, *mu*. A language acknowledged to be of the highest antiquity, in which all the words begin with a consonant, leads us up to this principle ; and the principle, in return, evinces the originality of the language it created.

M. Savary, in a discourse on a thesis * proposed to the literati, pretends that consonants were originally nothing more than *interceptions* of vowels ; as—*am*, *um*, &c. † Facts are unpleasant intruders on fancies ;

* An, ut cæteris animantibus, ita et homini sua vox peculiaris ? i. e. Did men first talk as birds whistled ? I answer, Yes ; if, like birds, men had no other aim than to listen to themselves.

† In contempt of the Egyptian *ma*, *mu* ; though of such authority with the ancients that it passed into a proverb—*Tu lacticulosus, nec ma, nec mu, argutas ?* ‡
—*Must you find fault, you suckling, who are not yet come to your ma, mu ?*

‡ Petr. Sat.

there

there are no such *interceptions* in the Chinese language.

Of a tenour with the preceding is the opinion of those who hold the simpler languages to be corruptions of the artificial *. Is not this to make the completion antecedent to the essay ?

To call some of those languages jargons, does not mend the matter ; the more imperfect they are, the less likely to have been borrowed from a better. Had the savage of America known the use of iron, he had not been found flaying with a wooden mattock.

* For instance, the Italian of the Latin : this is a great mistake. The Latin was a reform of the language of the country, on the model of the Greek : the modern Italian is a recurrence of the Latin into the terminations and construction of the original language. A resumption of first principles is not corruption. Was it not a compromise of the natives with their northern conquerors, who, attached to the simplicity of their own construction, could not be brought to adopt the Roman refinements ?

3°. Nunquam etiam in consonam desinunt, *exceptis* *n* et *ng*; quarum *m* finalis sonatur ut *ng*; *n*, ut *ne* *.



This constant termination of the monosyllable in a vowel, was the source, as we shall find, of the euphony of the Greek tongue.

The prevalence of the termination in *n* is remarkable throughout the Greek particles; as—*δην*, *μην*, *μων*, *γαν*, *νν*, *σσ*, and numberless others: with respect to these, the Greeks, perhaps, did no more than preserve the sound just as they found it; but its becoming the predominant final in the flexions of their nouns and verbs, marks an attachment to an early impression: happily, in this, taste coincided with habit; for,

* The difference in these final sounds will be sensible to us in *song—tune*. This difference is not observed by the French, who, from a predilection for nasality, give to their *n* final the sound of *ng*.

of all consonants, the *n* final comes nearest to the softness of a vowel ; which was the cause, no doubt, of its having been preferred by the Chinese linguist, who rarely used the *m* final ; and, after him, by the Greek, directed to this preference by the influence of example, and the delicacy of his ear.

It is observable that the Latins gave the preference to the termination in *m* ; whether through affectation of independence on the Greek, or that like their neighbours the Gauls they delighted in nasal tones, is a point which I shall not take upon me to determine.

The Chinese have not the letters *b*, *d*. It is certain that the Greeks pronounced their β like a *v* ; hence $\beta\alpha\delta\omega$ became the Latin *vado* ; and, vice versa, the Latin *v* was represented by the Greek β , as in *Livia*, $\Lambda\iota\beta\iota\alpha$; and so throughout.

It is known to the curious and learned in these matters, that the modern Greeks, like the ancient, do not use a *b* ; it is likewise

known that they pronounce the δ like our soft *th*. Have we not a right to conclude that they follow their ancestors in both; and, with the language, inherit the pronunciation? *

These

* They (the modern Greeks) pronounce the β like a *v*; the δ , like our *th*, in *that*, *this*; the θ , as we do *th* in *thistle*, *thing*; the η , like our *i*, in *lip*, and the ϵ open, as in the French and Italian: they make no difference between the $\circ$ and ω , pronouncing both as we do in *bone*.

WHEELER—Journey into Greece.

There are at this time two ladies in Bath, who having lived many years among the Greeks, speak the language well: they agree in every article with Wheeler. But I was, above all, curious to know how they would pronounce the following words—

Τι θελεις; αποθανειν θελω.

The answer was—*Tee thalis? apothanin thalo.*

In Petronius it is—*Thi thelis? opothanin thelo.*

Taking the passage in Petronius for an authentic specimen of the ancient pronunciation, I meant it as a test of correspondence in the modern. I expect little thanks for the result of my experiment, as it proves our school pronunciation of the *iota* in the τ , and other instances, and of the ϵ in every instance, to be all wrong.

One circumstance more—The modern Greeks adhere
here

These facts admitted, the Greeks had not, any more than the Chinese, the letters *b, d*.

But the Chinese have not an *r*; the Greeks had, and made abundant use of it: true—they borrowed it, with some words, from their northern neighbours; found it singularly adapted to imitation; and, it may be, took from this the first hint of their favourite refinement, the *ονοματοποιία*.

A distinguished grammarian (Beauzée) imputes to the Chinese *l'impossibilité person-*

here to the aspirated *χ* of their ancestors; in this more constant than the Latins, who changed it to an *f*, as is proved in *χλῶς*—*flos*; and still more happily by—

*Chloris eram, quæ Flora vocor; corrupta Latino
Nominis est nostri litera Græca sono.*

Ov. Fast. l. v. ver. 195.

The Grammatica Sinica attributes to the Chinese articulation, represented by *ch*, two different sounds; one of which, it is probable, was the parent sound of the *χ*, lost in the antiquated *Chloris* of the Romans, but preserved in the guttural *chi* of the Tuscans.

nelle

*nelle de prononcer le b et d**: if so, how came they by letters of the same organ in the *p* and *t*? for the *b* is but a denser *p*; the *d* stands in the same relation to the *t*. This points to the cause of the singularity in question. The Chinese being in possession of the neater articulations, rejected the coarser †: with them the rejection was choice; in their followers, habit. Every circumstance tends to prove originality

* If a philosopher could not discover the difference between incident and natural impediment, we are not to wonder at a vulgar error: thus, it is common to say, a negro *can* not articulate the labials *b*, *m*, *p*. We should say, he *does* not: the case is, he always speaks with his mouth open, for the greater facility of respiration, under the pressure of a suffocating atmosphere,

It is from the opposite habit, induced likewise by climate, that, throughout the languages of the North, words are charged with labial and dental consonants.

† My author observes, that, to the Chinese, neatness of articulation is a test of elegance. On the other hand, Lord Monboddo has pronounced the Chinese to be a nation of *dunces*: it is admitted on all hands that they are very *well bred*.

in

in the Chinese, and dependence in the Greek *.

Our author continues—

Eadem monosyllaba numerum 328, aut paulo ampliore, non excedere : multiplicata vocabula esse per tonos : cum ii toni sint quinque, inde statim effecta vocabula ad minus 1400 vel 1600.



And enough, in all reason, for the useful purposes of life ; for men as yet strangers to sentimental and speculative refinements : in such a state, the gradations of primitives into subtle derivatives, or fine-spun synonyms, had been anticipations.

Whether the root be a perfect monosyllable, or a duad, or even triad, formed on the monosyllable, it is the same thing with respect to the origin of the root : this calls for explanation, which I shall the more

* And I foresee, when this subject shall fall into abler hands, it will come out to the public with full conviction : in truth, my present aim is little more than to set it in motion.

readily

readily undertake, as it gives an open into an interesting subject, the rise and progress of the mechanism of the Greek language.

The first innovation of the Greek linguist on the Chinese monosyllable was extremely simple; it was to divide the monad, and give two sounds to that which had but one in the original.

Thus — *lao, nao, tao,*
became— $\lambda\alpha-\omega$, $\nu\alpha-\omega$, $\tau\alpha-\omega$.

This, *perhaps*, was the first attempt at a duad.

The second was more *effectual*, by inserting the consonant between the two vowels:

Thus — $\delta\alpha\omega$, $\delta\epsilon\omega$, $\delta\iota\omega$, $\delta\omicron\omega$, $\delta\upsilon\omega$,
became— $\alpha\delta\omega$, $\epsilon\delta\omega$, $\iota\delta\omega$, $\omicron\delta\omega$, $\upsilon\delta\omega$.

This, probably, gave rise in the Greek to words beginning with a vowel; the number of which will be much reduced, if aspirations are allowed to be consonants: they are something more than vowels, and there is no medium.

B

From

From $\beta\alpha\omega$ to $\psi\alpha\omega$, with their finals $\varepsilon\omega$, $\iota\omega$, &c. we may, with some few exceptions, follow throughout the alphabet the Greek verbal roots; *duads* by prescription, but *monads* in structure: for, to constitute a duad, there must be two articulations; $\beta\alpha\omega$ and $\beta\alpha\delta\omega$ are of a different mechanism. Now these monads are no other than Chinese primitives, which end as often in two vowels as in one; sometimes in three, and even four, as in the Greek.

One circumstance more—Almost all the Chinese verbs end in σ ; so do the Greek, the few ending in μ excepted, which, being derivatives or compounds, belong not to primitive language.

Are these the casual agreements of two stranger idioms, or unisons rising out of one common process?

And now observe the advances of the simple primitive— $\beta\alpha\omega$, $\beta\eta\mu$, $\beta\alpha\iota\omega$, $\beta\alpha\delta\omega$, $\beta\alpha\delta\iota\zeta\omega$, $\beta\iota\epsilon\alpha\zeta\omega$.

This is a key to the mechanism of the Greek language.

By

By this change introduced into the verbs, they became roots of more vigour, and of a structure better fitted to supply materials for derivation. This was not all: the superiority of a sounding polysyllable over a nerveless monad having gained the ear, and the effect of a balance of consonants with vowels having suggested an idea of a verbal harmony, the happy genius of the Greek seized the advantage; and by a constant application of this principle to the enlargements of derivation, composition, and inflection, he bestowed on his language such a dignity and sweetness, that, to his ear, which was a fine one, all other tongues were but the voices of barbarians *.

* *Βαρβαροφωνοί*. No wonder they should be so to a people who heard in their cradle such sounds as these—

Ολβιοι ευναζοισθε, κ' ολβιοι αω κοισθε. THEOCR.

Had not Milton those sounds in his ear?

———— My ever new delight,
Awake! —————

It has been the fancy of some to calculate the relative vocality of the Greek, and other tongues, by the number of words ending in a vowel or consonant. This might do in the comparison of monosyllabical languages, but is quite out of the question in the consideration of the Greek; for if, in words of length (and such for the most part are the Greek) five syllables out of six end in a vowel, as in *απαμειβομενος*, the vowel sounds are to the consonant as five to one; a proportion which, I believe, will pretty nearly hold through all the syllables of the Greek tongue; especially as the *n* final, from what has been observed, is to be classed with the vowel terminations *.

It is pleasing in any, but above all in a problematical process, to contemplate one truth springing out of another.

Thus the beautiful structure of the Greek polysyllable, and the euphony springing

* Κλαγγηδος προκαθιζονται.

from this structure *, are found to have their principle, as hath been hinted before, in a happy combination of monosyllables beginning with a consonant and ending in a vowel.

To this same structure we owe, that of all foreign tongues we articulate the Greek with the greatest facility.

* Yet the Greek, like other tongues, has its *barbs-
misses* :

Εσῶσα σ' ὥς ἰσασιν Ἑλλήνων ὅσοι.

True, this divine language takes in all the powers of imitation, from the nod of Jove to the hiss of a serpent. Was it for this that Euripides bore the title of φιλοσιγματῆς? In the present instance, the alliteration is a beauty; thrown on a letter of offensive sound, it aggravates the invectives of Medæa: her words carry stings; to the guilty Jason they were the snakes of Alecto.

Alliteration and iteration are the idioms of passion; so, in the line preceding that above cited—

Εκτων δὲ πρῶτων πρῶτον ἀρξομαι.

And so his faithful copyist:

Quæ quibus anteferam? jam, jam—

Cicero knew not when to stop——Te, te, inquam,
Fanni, a tuis subfelliis contra te testem suscitabo.

Pro Roscio.

The excess betrays the trick, and defeats the effect.

Does not this make it probable that we come nearer to the true articulation of the Greek than of any other dead language? And is not this conjecture confirmed by the pleasure we receive from the sounds of this language? a pleasure which in this, as in all things, must be in proportion to the truth of the impression?

It may be thought that words so perfectly simple as the Chinese, might have been in Greece, as well as in China, aboriginal. Even this notion, were it founded, would fall in with my principal object, which is to point out the steps by which the artificial first rose out of the language of nature: a subject that had not remained open to the present hour, had not the learned fallen off from the philosophy of language, to set up a phantom, an inspired tongue*.

* *Adamo et Evæ inspiravit Deus Hebrææ linguæ cognitionem primo momento quo conditi sunt.*

Bochart was resolved they should lose no time, and so provides them with words until ideas should come.

I do

I do admit that the sense should decide in the comparison of languages ; but it must be obvious that it cannot be altogether so in the case before us : for as the Chinese, by their tones, made every word to stand for five different ideas, the Greeks were not only at liberty to choose any one of the five, but to extend this licence to collateral ideas ; a licence which the creative genius of this people would stretch to the utmost : for this reason it must be difficult to determine, in numberless instances, whether the same word did or did not stand for the same idea in the two languages.

In proportion as essential proofs are unattainable, those which spring from circumstances acquire authority. In short, were the words in each language the signs of the same ideas, the two languages would be one ; and what I propose as a conjecture would be certainty.

De Verbis.

QUOD apud Sinas monosyllaba sint, ut nomina, ita verba, hinc etiam concludes nec derivata esse posse ulla; quam ob rem omnia esse et simplicia et simplicissima.

2°. Cum monosyllabum unumquodque propriè ac reverà infinitum sit, atque infinitivi loco haberi possit.



The verb, throughout its moods, affirms something; it declares some condition or circumstance annexed to the action. In the infinitive, which I will not call a mood, the verb is at large; it contains no affirmation *; or, in the language of the logician,

it

* For this reason, notwithstanding my great respect for the author of the *Grammaire Raisonnée**, I

* The celebrated Arnaud,

cannot

it is no proposition: for this reason it assumes in the Chinese, as we shall see hereafter, the function of a participle; for, like the participle, being indifferent to all moods, it is equally applicable to them all.

The Chinese having exhausted their vowel terminations on the unmodified signs of ideas, stopped short of inflection; they do not even apply it to the substantive verb, which consequently, with them, has not the

cannot admit the following definition of the verb: "Ce qui est essentiel au verbe, sa seule vraie définition est—vox significans affirmationem."—With submission, it is not in virtue solely of its being a verb that it signifies affirmation; to attain this, it must be thrown into mood and tense †: accordingly, the author finds himself, in the instant, obliged to qualify his definition by—"Car on ne sauroit trouver de mot qui marque l'affirmation, qui ne soit verbe, ni de verbe qui ne serve à la marquer, *au moins dans l'indicatif*."

† Hence Aristotle—*ἦμα δὲ φωνὴ σημαντικὴ μετὰ χρόνον*—"the verb is a voice made significant by the *tense*:" to which he should have added—and the tense is made significant by the noun or pronoun that governs it. Here the two deepest thinkers on this subject have proved how difficult it is to bring a part of speech within the bounds of a definition.

virtue

virtue of an auxiliary : they have, therefore, no other means of expressing the circumstances of the action, than by accompanying the principal verb with other verbs declaring the circumstances, or by particles destined to answer the purpose.

The disputes of grammarians touching the first and genuine state of the verb, are determined by the existence of a language, in which, without changing its destination, the verb cannot be made to pass out of the infinitive *.

“ Syrorum et Chaldæorum dialectos quis-
 “ quis cum Hebræa lingua conferet, palam
 “ videbit hanc esse antiquiorem, quia sim-
 “ plicissima est.”

Bochart would not have established this test of originality, had he known that there

* So, in lingua Franca, to say, *I will* or *would marry you*, is, *Mi voleri sposarti, moi vouloir t'épouser* : a curious renovation of primitive simplicity ! Is it not owing to this very simplicity that this is become the language of commerce from the Strait of Gibraltar to that of the Dardanelles ?

was

was a language still more simple than the Hebrew.

The first departure of language from its natural state, was the artificial but happy innovation by inflection. The language which has not, in any one instance, changed the termination of its primitive, stands single and unrivalled in its claim to simplicity.

It is the opinion of some, that men first spoke in a language of inflection: we may as well be told that men did not sing before they had a gamut *.

* The imperfect declensions of our auxiliary verbs exhibit an image of the origin of inflection, in broken attempts and sudden returns to primitive usage. Here our linguists stopt; and, if they had not the power to go all the way, I rejoice, for myself, that they went no further: for I cannot join in opinion with those who think every approach to the Greek and Latin an improvement: in this case, nothing short of system is well. The transitions from simple construction to awkward inflection, shuffling through the languages of the continent, should reconcile us to that which is by pedants called Poverty, but in fact is Consistency, in the English.

What

What have we to regret? The sublime of Milton, the imagery of Shakespear, the strong sense of Dryden, have found in our language correspondent energies; and we enjoy, *at this hour*, all that diction *can* bestow on the fancy of a Burke, the wit of a Sheridan, and the elegance of a Burgoyne.

Of Tenses.

Cognito semel infinitivo, seu verbi monosyllabo,
sunt per additionem particularum tempora tria.

1°. Præteritum.

2°. Præsens.

3°. Futurum.

Quæ hic tibi orientalium more, qui antiquissimus est,
et juxta naturæ ipsius ordinem, explicabuntur.

1°. Præteritum.

Additur tantum monosyllabo, idque in fine, parti-
cula seu verbum—

<i>leao</i>		desiit
vel <i>kuo</i>		transiit.

Hoc modo—

<i>ngo</i>		ego
<i>go</i>		facere
<i>leao</i>		desii
vel		<i>vel</i>
<i>kuo</i>		transii—

feci.



Where

Where the final vowels, in whatever number they may be, make but one sound, as in the Chinese; and where the termination is subject, as in the Greek, to the variations of inflection, we must not look for correspondence beyond the governing consonant: the Greeks, therefore, can hardly be said to have changed the *kno*, or *koo*, into *κα*, the general designation of their preterperfect; but, in aid of this, they prefixed an augmentative *ε*, strengthening it with the governing consonant of the verb—

As, *εαω* — *εεεηκα*
 γαω — *γεεηκα*.

De Plusquam-perfecto.



This tense, in the Chinese, is a *double* preter-perfect—

As,

ngo

ki

kuo

leao

ego

incipere

transitum

finitum—

incepteram.



The plusquam-perfectum of the Greek is formed by *doubling* the augmentative sign of the preter-perfect—

As,

γεγραφα

εγεγραφειν

scripsi

scripseram.

These strokes of correspondence, taken singly, are trifles; in succession, and number, they rise into system.

2°. *Præsens.*

1°. Verbum seu monosyllabum verbi in præsentis indicari, cum particula aliorum temporum adest nulla.

2°. Locutiones ejusmodi suspensas atque indeterminatas in usu esse atque amari, quod majestatis præ se ferant nescio quid.



This *majestatis nescio quid*, seems unhappily applied to a language that labours in every instance to make out the idea: but, whatever may be the nature of this apparent indecision, it certainly prevailed through all the languages of the East: a clear indication that they had all one common parent.

Les langues orientales n'ont que le passé et le futur, ce qui rend ces langues sujettes à beaucoup d'ambiguités, qui ne se rencontrent point dans les autres *.

* Grammaire Raisonnée.

Les Hébreux n'ont ni présent, ni imparfait—ils disent—credidi, propter quod locutus sum, au lieu de—credo, et ideo loquor * †.

If the Greeks borrowed the rudiments of their language from the Chinese, or any other of the oriental tongues, they must have been in the early habit of using a preterite for a present tense; and, from custom, so powerful in language, the usage would at times take place, after the necessity had ceased. Had this occurred to the learned Translator of Homer, it might have saved him the trouble of a long, and, to my apprehension, ineffectual comment on the preter-perfect in the following line—

Κλυθι μεν, Αργυροτοξ, ος χρυσην αμφιβεβηκας.

Tempus hoc non est, says the learned

* Supplement au Gram. Raif.

† Nullum tempus est præsens—Is this a metaphysical subtlety, or, the first and most natural conception of the thing?

C

Critic,

Critic, ut vulgo vocant grammatici, præteritum perfectum, sed *præsens perfectum*.

This may be brought to a short issue—
Had the Poet been forced by the sense to make use of an acknowledged preter-perfect, must he not have employed this very *præsens perfectum*?

Helen, describing the Grecian chiefs, who at the time were standing before her, says—

Ιδομενευς δ' ἔλεωθεν ἐνὶ κρήλεσσι, θεὸς ὡς,
ἔσκη'— Stat.

So Æschylus—

ἔσκηκε κίων— stat columna.

And Euripides—

Δεδοίκα σε— metuo te.

The following is still more decisive—

Τοσῶδε γ' ἦσσον, ἢ παρὸς, πεποιθα σοὶ *.

Et tanto minus, quam antea, confido
tibi.

* Med. Eurip.

Had

Had the Latin translation of this passage been exact, the substitution of a preterite for a present tense, would have embarrassed the sense : in the Greek it had the sanction of custom, and the impropriety, for such it is, was lost in the frequency of the practice.

Hebræorum verba nullam habent formam qua tempus præsens imperfectum, sive actio jam instans, propriè exponi potest ; id fit per participium solummodo, et per verbum substantivum subintellectum *.

The participium solummodo of the Hebrew, is the counterpart of the monosyllabum verbi standing single in the Chinese.

Had the substantive verb been expressed, the participle would have united with its auxiliary ; the auxiliary would have declined itself ; the time of the action have been determined ; and the Hebrew had been possessed of a present tense.

In order to have enjoyed an effectual

* Lowth, de Sa. Po. Heb.

participle, the Chinese must have changed the form of his primitive : of this he had no conception.

The difficulties to which the inventors of language were subject, in bringing sounds to be permanent signs of ideas, must have made them careful to preserve those signs intire, and apprehensive of defeating their labours, by any innovation on the adopted sound. Inflection, therefore, would be of late invention, and more likely to occur to those who should borrow their primitives, than to those who had formed them.

Were we to be governed by the reason of the thing, I should be apt to conclude, that inflection had made no great progress before the establishment of writing : when the eye co-operating with the ear, the change in the termination had a visible signature, and the varying of the sound was no longer hazardous.

To act—action—acting.

The gradation in these ideas led the Chinese to attempt a participle ; it was but an attempt—As,

σο		facere
χι		qui— <i>genitivi nota</i> ,
		faciens.

Let us now observe the steps of the Greek linguist.

ποιεν		facere
το ποιεν		factio
ποιων		faciens
τυγχανω ποιων		sum faciens
ετυγχανον ποιων		eram faciens.

Here he seems to have stopped short, and to have changed his system, by transferring the conjugation from the auxiliary to the verb itself—

As, *εποιεν* | faciebam.

This was a master-stroke ; it superseded the

delay of the auxiliary ; put the verb in possession of an undivided energy, and became the principal source of the superiority of the Greek over all the languages, which, following nature's first hints, have adhered to the system on which they set out. With what propriety are these languages called modern ?

If my idea of the advantage bestowed on the verb by the dismissal of the auxiliary, should stand in need of explanation, it will receive it, if I mistake not, from the following example—

Ambrosiæ vero comæ concussæ sunt.

Ἀμβροσίου δ' αὖτα χεῖται ἐπερρωσάντο.

In the Latin, the sound and the impression are broken, interrupted ; instead of pressing upon our feelings, as in the Greek, they subside, they are lost in the co-operation of the auxiliary.

The Chinese could not have a participle without changing the form of the verb ;
for

for this reason, they made their infinitive verb to supply its place, as likewise to assume the function of a substantive—

As,	<i>gai</i>	{	amare,
			amatio.
	<i>fo</i>	{	facere,
			factio.

The Greeks added, as we have seen, an article to the infinitive *το φιλειν, το ποιειν*—perhaps before they had a participle, which is better; as—*the loving, the doing*. Our early writers delighted much in this kind of substantive; not only as it contributes to *the varying* of the diction; but that, happily used, it gives strength and beauty to the expression.

The facility with which the verb resolves itself into a substantive, accounts for the substantive's coming immediately after the verb in the progress of language; and this again may serve to account for the phenomenon of a language without adjectives; which is the case in the Chinese; for the

linguist being in possession of a noun, or name of a thing, his next care was to make the most of his acquisition; and having found, that by a certain management of the substantive, or verb, he could make a shift to convert a general quality into a particular attribute, which is the office of the adjective *, he proceeded no further, for in this,

* Substantives, as distinguished from adjectives, are names of qualities abstracted from the consideration of their existence in any particular subject; if, therefore, the Chinese have no other way of attributing qualities to things, than through the medium of the substantive, it follows, that, in the order of thinking, they began with *generals*, and descended to *particulars*; contrary to the received notion of the progress of the understanding, which is supposed to rise from *particulars* to *generals*.

Do not all the objects in nature present themselves first to our notice in the aggregate? when a rainbow appears, we see it in the intire; and pass from thence to the examination of its colours. Will not this apply to all complex terms expressing sentiments; such as *love, fear, hope, anger, hatred*, and numberless others? The thinking mind will not let this drop.

as in all the other parts, from a constant acquiescence under feeble equivalents, the Chinese is nothing more than a language of attempts ; the attainments were reserved for the Greek.

3°. *Futurum.*

The Chinese have, first, a futurum indeterminatum, formed by their indefinite particle or verb *yao*—*volo*—*I will do*—*ωοιησω*.

Quod si post particulam

yao | *volo*

additum fuerit monosyllabum

leao | *præterit.*

futurum *quasi* præteritum efficiet.



This

This is the paulo post futurum, μετ' ολιγον μελλων * ;—as, *τεποιησομαι*, *I shall have done it presently, 'tis as good as done*—futurum quasi præteritum.

The learned do not agree in their construction of this tense : resolved into a phrase, it is readily understood : in fact, the sense of every tense amounts to a phrase ; and hence it is, that the nature of a tense is best explained by the languages which have not adopted inflection. With this plain road before us, what have we to do with the metaphysical labyrinths †, the learned perplexities, of Hermes and his followers ?

We

* On peut avoir envie de marquer une chose qui doit arriver bien-tôt, ainsi nous voyons que les Grecs ont leur *paulo post futurum*, μετ' ολιγον μελλων ; qui marque que la chose se va faire, ou qu'on la doit *presque tenir comme faite*—

Gram. Raisonnée.

† Metaphysics—As this species of philosophy has no foundation in nature, the moderns, with some propriety, have given it a name that had no place in language. But no matter for the name ; the subject is happily described by the Stagyrice himself, in the opening of his Treatise of Abstractions ; so happily, indeed,

We have seen that the Chinese has a *præteritum perfectum* : it has likewise a second preterite, equivalent to a similar tense in the Greek, in our own, and in every European language, except the Latin :

As,	
<i>cie</i>	articulo
<i>na</i>	illius
<i>xi</i>	temporis
<i>ngo</i>	ego
<i>kien</i>	videre.

The pupil of nature thinks at full length, and delivers what he thinks in the order and form in which he thinks.

indeed, that whoever undertakes to get through the work, will many a time wish he had been contented with the description. It is thus—"The philosopher is, in a manner, a lover of *fable* (φιλομυθῶν); for fable consists of things *wonderful*: so that if, to avoid ignorance, men *philosophized*, it is plain they took this course, δια το εἰδέναι το ἐπιστᾶσθαι *—that they might *seem* to be wise, and not with a view to any *utility* whatever." This is the philosophy we are called upon to revive; and roundly told, that without it we are little better than simpletons.

* Causa cognoscendi, Lat. Ver. This will not do. The translator knew it well, but was partial to the cause.

Art

Art speaks by contractions—*ιδω **, *I saw it*—articulo illius temporis.

This tense is a definite of the *past*; in like manner as the paulo post is a definite of the *future*.

From the tenor of the preceding examples it appears, that the variety and precision of the Greek tenses were of the simplest origin; and that the apparently nice distinctions of a first and second future, of a first

* *Ιδω*—This is called an aorist, or indefinite: it may be such, when it stands by itself, and is unapplied; but it cannot be so, where the time of the action is specified; as—*I saw it yesterday*; because, to apply an indefinite tense to a definite time, would be an impropriety. The Latin, it is true, hath not this tense; and so much the worse; for, it is forced to say—*I have seen it yesterday*; which, it must be allowed, is little better than bungling.

The Romans, in forming their language from the Greek, were too intent on reducing what they thought superfluities: by rejecting the second preterite, instead of clipping a luxuriancy, they lopt off a limb.

Our ancestors were so intent on the possession of this tense, that, contrary to the genius of the language, they forced the verb to submit to inflection.

and

and second preterite †, were formed on the essays of the primitive linguists. The essay was a phrase; the tense, by inflection, a contraction of the phrase.

As verbs are almost all-efficient in the Chinese, I had determined to confine my inquiries to them: in this course, my next step would have been, to take into consideration their moods. But I am tempted in this place to break in on the regularity of my subject, and to turn my thoughts to collateral matters. I have a pleasure in changing the objects, and varying the impressions; and if so, why may it not have the same effect on my reader? Every little relief is allowable in a subject so dry and unenterprising as this.

† We must not expect from the Chinese a duplication of this tense; it is of no apparent use as a distinction of time, and to multiply sounds was no part of their system.

Of

Of Degrees of Comparison.

The Chinese, having no adjectives, must apply degrees of comparison to verbs and nouns.

As thus to the verb—

<i>lo</i>		<i>volo</i>
<i>yeun</i>		<i>magis</i>
<i>magis volens—</i>		

Græcè—*λω*, *volo*—*λω-ίων*, *magis volens*.

Here the Chinese and Greek are but one language.

Fiunt superlativa.

1°. Particulâ *tai* | *excessivè*.

Sic,

<i>tai</i>		<i>excessivè</i>
<i>ta</i>		<i>magnus</i>
<i>maximus.</i>		

2°. *Duplica*

2°. Duplica monosyllabum, et habebis superlativum.

kao | altus
* kao | altus
altissimus.

These two modes were by the Greeks moulded into one; for, having borrowed the sign of excess—*tai*, they formed their superlative by transferring the *iteration* from the thing to the sign:

As— $\upsilon\psi\omega\text{-}\tau\alpha\text{-}\tau\alpha$, altissima.

In this instance, the imitation in the process is confirmed by the identity in the sound.

* This superlative runs through all the American languages: it has passed into every language, and with additions, as is usual in after-thoughts—*happy, happy, happy pair*—so from $\tau\epsilon\iota\varsigma \mu\alpha\kappa\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, to *terque, quaterque beati*; rising at last to *ter geminis honoribus*. The Italian keeps within the original idea; and to better effect:—

Si gittò vivo vivo nel fuoco.

ΒΟΕΚΑΕ.

The

The grammarians start at such comparatives as * καλλος-καλλιων, † κυδος-κυδιων : it is a form, say they, *quæ prorsus ab omni analogia recedit*. This is a mistake ; it was an early practice (as in the instance of the verb before stated) antecedent to the rules from which it is supposed to have been a departure. In short, it was borrowed from the Chinese, who have no adjective, and must have been in use with the Greeks at a period when they had few or none.

Les langues Huronnes et Iroquoises (according to Lafitau) n'ont que le verbe, qui domine dans toute la langue, ainsi point de nom substantif et adjectif ‡. And in another

* Pulchritudo. † Gloria.

‡ Mœurs des Sauvages. This shakes the decision of Court de Gebelin, that nouns preceded verbs in the formation of language.

Verbs expressing sentiments, or the simple motions of mind ; as—to love, fear, hope, and the like ; or the actions of sense ; as—to see, hear, feel, &c. ; or actions in general ; as—to sit, stand, run, &c. &c. such verbs, I say, must have preceded the nouns denoting our ideas of those motions and actions ; because, in the order of nature,

other place he observes, that numbers, genders, and persons are not otherwise distinguished than by *tones*. Here they fall short of the Chinese, who have signs for the variations of the same idea, reserving the *tones* for the distinction of different ideas.

nature, *the doing* comes before the idea which we form of the *thing done*; and this is the true distinction, in all that relates to action, between the verb and the noun. Hence it is that in our language (except where we have borrowed them from other tongues) there are no nouns or names for many of the most familiar ideas, as of *bearing, feeling, doing, going, coming, &c.*; nor are they missed, their function having been anticipated by the participle, which is a mode of the verb. This principle accounts for the remarkable prevalence of the participle throughout our language: yet there are grammarians who derive the participle from the noun.

We are to observe, that the nouns—*love, fear, hope*, are no other than the verb standing alone, without regimen or prefix *. Such nouns, it should seem, must abound in every language, in proportion to its simplicity. Thus, in Chinese, *co* is either *facere* or *facitio*; *gai*, *amare* or *amatio*; and so throughout.

* *T*, i. e. *agere*. See *Επεα πλεγόμενα*, p. 386—a most valuable work; and the more so, as it promises, what is much wanted, a New Theory of Language.—*I, bone, quo ingenium tuum te vocat!*

The simplicity of the invention makes it probable that the Hurons have struck out nouns of the same character; and, unless we would reduce them (as a noble author has done) to the awkward situation of speaking in a language without construction, we may suppose that, like the Chinese, they make their verbs assume the uses of prepositions and conjunctions. Language, without the means of connecting ideas, would be a circulation of blood without veins and arteries; a system of muscles without nerves, and of joints without ligaments.

Of Numbers.

IT seems, at first, difficult to conceive how a plural could be had without a change in the termination. Let us see how the Chinese brought this about.

Fit Pluralis per monosyllaba ; seu particula *muen* et *moei*, more.

Sic,

<i>ngo</i> —ego		<i>ni</i> —tu		<i>ta</i> —ille
<i>ngo</i>		<i>ni</i>		<i>ta</i>
<i>moei</i> —nos		<i>muen</i> —vos		<i>moei</i> —illi.

Here we have a language just out of its cradle ; its attempts, like the steps of a child, are timid, doubtful—*prætentat iter*.

As I do not know what sound should belong to the *n*, in *ngo*, I suppose it to be the representative of a tone ; the Greeks literal-

D 2

ized

ized the tone, which produced their $\varepsilon\gamma\omega$ * : such too, perhaps, was the $\alpha\upsilon$ prefixed to the

* How natural it was for the Greeks to proceed in this way, may be collected from hence, that the very same thing has been done, of late, by those who have attempted to give us some specimens of the Ta-hei-te language, which is manifestly a dialect of the Chinese. These specimens are—

<i>o-tea</i>		the first man.
<i>e-toa</i>		the war tree.
<i>a-bo</i>		a dress, or cloth.
<i>e-hoo</i>		the breasts.
<i>oo-po</i>		the head.
<i>a-vai</i>		the foot.

The above words are precisely Chinese monosyllables, beginning with a consonant, and ending in a vowel, or diphthong. The apparently initial vowels, *o-tea*, *e-toa*, are but the signs of the tones, which determine, as in the Chinese, the different significations of the word. These tones our travellers had no other way of marking, than by a vowel that comes the nearest to the sound of the tone: this it was that led them into the mistake, that their words all begin with a vowel. “The words of this language are never terminated by a consonant. The numerous vowels require a variation of diphthongs and accents, which often occasion a material alteration in the sense.”

FORSTER'S Observ. p. 401-2-3.

primitive

primitive *ta*, ille; as in *αυτος, αυτοι, αυτα*.
 As to the Greek *συ*, Dores dicunt *τυ*, et cum
 syllaba *νη*, *τυνη**, this is remarkable; the
 Doric dialect, which was the old Pelasgic,
 would not give up its primitive *ni*. Homer
 sometimes uses *τυνη* for *συ*.

The *moei* and *muen* were not quite over-
 looked in the plurals *ἡμεῖς, ἡμῶν*.

The Chinese *ta-moei*—*he more*, or, as we
 should express it, *many bes*, marks the pro-
 cedure of intellect in forming, and of lan-
 guage in conveying, an idea of plurality.
 This idea is not so obvious as is generally
 thought: of all the subjects of intellect, the
 doctrine of Numbers is that in which sa-
 vages make the slowest progress.

The Greek plural takes up the subject at
 a period of improvement, and conveys the
 idea by an appropriated sound, or sign by in-
 flection. “ ’Tis impossible,” says a learned
 Grammarian †, “ to conceive how any lan-
 guage can want the variation of the noun,

* Lexicon.

† Clarke, Lat. Gram.

“where the nature of its signification is
“such as to admit of plurality.”

Unhappily for this remark, we have before us a language which proves it to be very possible. The Grammarian mistakes refinement for nature, or the after thought for the first.

De Genere Nominum.

GENUS determinatur, 1°. Ex rerum natura.

Sic,

<i>gin</i>		homo—
<i>niu</i>		foeminitatis
<i>gin</i>		homo *—
foemina.		



In what does *θηλεια θεος* differ from *foeminitatis homo*, except in this, that the Chinese, not having an adjective, was forced to make the best use he could of the substantive?

* A she man ;—in Hebrew (according to Bochart) *issa-vira*, a man she ; the sex rather awkwardly in a postfix.

D 4

But

But was not *γυν* compounded of *κιν*
gin *, under the customary licence of trans-
 position ?

2°. Per monosyllabum designandæ speciei proprium.

Sic,

<i>keûen</i>		canis
<i>ku</i>		mascula—
<i>keûen</i>		canis
<i>mu</i>		fœmina—

Græcè, ὁ κῦων, ἡ κῦων—a he, a she dog.

Here the gender is confined to the ar-
 ticle ; probably before inflection had taken
 place in substantives.

The Chinese had no conception of attri-
 buting genders to things inanimate.

According to the *Grammaire Raisonnée*,
*les genres ont ete inventes pour les terminai-
 sons*. But the Messrs. Du Port Royal have
 discovered a different origin ; they tell us,

* The Swedish *guinna* and *γυν* are sister com-
 pounds ; so *fœmina* and *woman* :—*facies non una, nec
 diversa tamen*.

that

that *arbor est feminine, parceque comme une bonne mere elle porte du fruit* : *—miratur non sua. How could Frenchmen forget, that, in their own *la meilleure des langues possibles*, fruit-trees are masculine, and their fruits feminine ? Our ancestors did not understand such trifling. “ The English language, “ with singular propriety, following nature “ alone, applies the distinction of masculine “ and feminine only to the names of animals †.”

The modern Grammarians, in general, accommodate their ideas of propriety to the laws of inflection ; they take no notice of the grammar of nature.

* This is to make that a principle which is but an usage. Mr. Harris has adopted this idea ; he might as well have left it to its legitimate parents.

† Lowth, Introd. to Eng. Gram.

De Casibus Nominum.

APUD Sinas casus ignoti * ; ex articulis tantum oritur differentia.

Itaque 1°. Nominativus, et 2°. Accusativus, monosyllabum simplex.



Determined, as in our language, by the sense, and the position.

3°. Genitivus fit per particulam *tie*.



ex TOT *spavz*—e cælo.

* I am informed by my learned friend Mr. Winstanley, to whom no language, worth knowing, is unknown, that in Arabic the variations of termination by which the cases are marked, are altogether neglected in the language of conversation : a remarkable adherence to primitive usage, in a language so finished, that, in the opinion of some, it disputes the palm with the Greek itself. “ La plus riche langue du monde est l’Arabe : aucune nation n’a fait tant de cas de la poésie que celle ci.”

Mechan. du Lang.

Our author does not attribute any idea, as in other instances, to the sign of this case; a circumstance which, in a language so explicit as the Chinese, marks a degree of uncertainty in the nature of cases. Are not the Greek genitive and Latin ablative convertible into each other? The Greek, it is true, *must* use a case which it has, for one which it has not: but it was not necessary to use a genitive for an accusative—*κλυθι με*, audi me; or, indifferently, a dative—*κλυθι μοι*.

4°. Ad Dativum utuntur particulis *γῦ* et *γυ*, Gallicè *pour*, *en faveur*.



It will not readily be admitted, that what one objects *to* another, must be in his favour. A case is not to be appropriated to one precise idea: it is best understood in a language in which the preposition does all,
and

and *to* which, as *to* the Chinese, the case is *unknown*. We have but one, a genitive; and the learned are not agreed as to its meaning or origin*.

5°. Vocativus admittit *ho*, five *o*, in fine.



The *o* has only changed its position in
Ω αὐδρες Ἀθηναῖοι.

6°. Quod si Ablativum volueris, habes etiam illa
ativi monosyllaba, et præterea *tum*.



* The Laplanders, it is said, have thirteen cases: this may very well be. A people much confined in the range of their ideas will be most exact in the discriminations of the few that they have. They particularize, because they do not generalize; and are rich in minutiae, because they are poor in essentials.

Συν σοι, Θεα—tecum, dea.

This may serve to determine the dispute among the learned, whether the Greek has an ablative or not : *ιδον οφθαλμοις*, is one of the proofs that it has ; but here the preposition *συν* is understood, which makes it, as above, the Chinese dative, with its preposition.

“ Si Genitivus adhibetur, additur præpositio.”



This too, in the Greek, is a constant equivalent to an ablative.

Εξ ιππων αποξαντες—ab equis descendentes.

In this, and the preceding example, the case has no energy. What, then, is a case possessed of its energy ? It is a sign, by inflection, of some condition or circumstance annexed to the noun, and through the noun to its relatives.

If, therefore, no condition be annexed,

except by the preposition, expressed or understood, it should seem that in every such instance the case were altogether useless: but it is not so; in one point of view it is of very great use: for, by the agreement in the terminations, it preserves the connection between the noun and its relatives; without which, transposition could not well have taken place: and, in such a polysyllabical language as the Greek, it had been difficult to preserve a facility of movement, had the words been confined to the natural order of the thoughts. Was it not for the same purpose that every noun had its gender?

It is probable that cases were invented with a view to a more elegant construction, by dropping the use of the preposition: but the Greeks having observed, that, without the preposition, the case, in many instances, was indecise; and that, united with the preposition, it was for the most part insignificant; they paid more attention to the preposition, and less to the case: the case was
to

to them little more than a varying of the termination.

The Romans took the opposite course: they slighted the preposition, and cultivated the case; and this it was that led them to the institution of an ablative, which being destined to unite with, or to imply *, the prepositions *with, from, in, out of*, and others, left the genitive and dative to their own exertions.

The Latin has the advantage in the neatness of the execution; the Greek, in the certainty of expressing the sense †.

It

* I say, *unite with*, or *imply*; because it was their object, wherever the sense would suffer it, to exclude the preposition, and do all by inflection: and it must be confessed, that, by adhering to this system, they carried their point, and rose upon the Greek in elegance of construction.

† Displeased with the redundancy of particles in the Greek, the Romans extended their displeasure to the article, which they totally banished. Was not this to tear away the cloth with the lace?

The *pulchrum* of the Latin is no equivalent to the το καλον of the Greek, or the *beautiful* of the English:
it

It may be objected to me, that I have been too minute on the articles of Number, Gender, and Case. I will answer in the words of a French Grammarian: Les choses les plus petites deviennent grandes, quand elles peuvent servir aux plus grandes.

it is better when they say, *pulchrum et honestum*; the two adjectives keep each other in countenance. Nor is, *Cæsar, is qui dictator fuit*, an equivalent, though proposed as such, to Καῖσαρ ὁ αυτοκράτωρ, or to “Cæsar the dictator.”

Aristotle observes that there is a degree of pleasure in anger, ἀπο τῆς ἐλπίδος τε τιμωρησασθαι. The Latin cannot render that τε; it can only translate the verb, or substitute a phrase.

‘Thou art *the* man—“ In that single THE, that diminutive particle, all the force and efficacy of the “*reason* is contained. By that alone are the *premises* “applied, and so firmly fixed as *never to be shaken*.” HERMES.—Had he pronounced the word without emphasis, it had saved him all this trouble. Profound philosophers never see the object that plays on the surface. Has not the THOU in this passage a claim to some part of the importance bestowed on the THE?

De Verborum Modis.

APUD Sinas, cum monosyllabum verbi unum semper idemque sit, et ad tempora et modos ambiguum remaneat, nisi hac vel illa particula vel phrasi restringatur, exponendum nobis hoc loco, quæ modi illi fiant.

De Imperativo.

1^o. Est sæpissime monosyllabum infinitivum.

Sic,

sedere, *vel* sede.



Græcè, ὡς δὲ σὺ ποιεῖς*—sic et tu facere,
i. e. facito.

* This imperative has passed into the Italian—Non far quello.

E

And

And again—

—— Συ δὴ μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν
 ἰσχεῖν ἐν στήθεσσι.——

ἰσχεῖν—cohibere, *vel* cohibere :

an absolute Sinæcism. Of this the examples are not common ; just in that proportion which marks the returns of a habit not quite exhausted.

The continual deviations of the Greek language from the laws of grammar, are evident proofs of the prevalence of habits anterior to the establishment of those laws. Can it be supposed that men of sense, after the institution of a grammatical system, would run counter to all analogy through caprice, or in gaiety of spirit, especially where the sounds had been more perfect by a strict adherence to analogy ?

2°. Exprimitur Imperativus per circumlocutiones,
et monosyllaba desiderii.

Sic,

<i>cim</i>		quæso
<i>ki</i>		incipere—
<i>scil.</i> incipe.		



Græcè, *λεγεις αν* — dic, quæso ; or, with the verb possessed of its mood, *κλυοις αν* — audi, quæso : *κλυοις αν* pro *κλυθι*, optativus pro imperativo *.

I cannot quit the Chinese imperative, without taking notice of a remark of our Grammarian :—

“ Sinæ vix ac ne vix quidem imperando
“ alloquuntur quemquam : itaque impera-
“ tivus honestatis ac comitatis plenus.”

If character is to be brought forward on this occasion, I should give the preference to a more natural motive, on a supposition

• Hoogeveen.

that manners are simple before they are elegant.—There is a nation of savages, so we call them, who have not a form in their language to express a command. To what purpose, say they, should we have a sign for a thing which cannot be; since, all men being equal, no man can have a right to impose his will on another?

The sturdiness of the Huron has more the air of a principle than the politeness of the Chinese.

De Optativo.

Optativum suum formant Sinæ, si verbum *ÿuen*, quod est *desidero, cupio*, usurparint.

Sic,

<i>ngo</i>		ego
<i>ÿuen</i>		cuperem
<i>ki</i>		incipere—

seu, libenter inciperem.

ngo

ngo	ego
yuen	vellem
xue	dicere.



Græcè, φα-ινυ — vellem dicere.

Velle et *optare* are but degrees of the same affection : hence the Latin hath no optative ; and, in our language, *to will* rises to a *wish*, merely by a stronger accent—*would* that I could please you. There is a kind of suspense between the two moods in the following—

Fain *would* I rise, but that I fear to fall.

Have we not in *ινυ*, the distinctive termination of the Greek optative, an evident adoption of *yuen*—vellem ? But the *yuen* of the Chinese is a verb : true, and so are their particles in general. May we not infer from hence, that the Greek particles were

likewise verbs, but being forced to give way to the refinement of inflection, they lost their primitive energies; were reduced, in general, from principles to accessories, and, *at times*, to something *less*?

If the particle of itself expresses the idea, as when it supplies the place of a mood in the verb, it is a principal—λεγεις αν, dicas; if the idea be expressed without it, it is an accessory—λεγοις αν. Is it not in the latter character a παραπληρωματικον, except where, though not necessary to the sense, it serves to give some advantage to the expression?

The doctrine of particles having been originally verbs, would have been slighted some few years ago, before Mr. Horne * had discovered that a great number of the particles in our language are verbs or participles; such as *if, an, and, eke, yet, still, unless, else, though, but, without, lest, since*, and others. This discovery has restored these words,

* See his Letter to Mr. Dunning.

and their similars in other languages, to their just right of being the names of ideas ; a right of which they had been dispossessed by the grammarians and philosophers who knew not their origin.

De Subjunctivo.

Quod si nunc quæsieris, Quî Sinæ, tum subjunctivum, tum varia infinitivorum genera, gerundia, futura infinitivi in *rus*, in *dus*, &c. facitent ?

Respondeo, apud Hebræos, Chaldæos, Arabas, Æthiopas, &c. deesse omnia hæc, imo necessaria non esse, cum per præpositiones ac particulas activè et passivè nullo negotio resolvantur :—idem executi Sinæ et ubique *præpositionibus* ac *postpositionibus*.



Among the proofs of the dependence of the Greek on its original, its employment of the preposition and postposition in forming an equivalent to a subjunctive, demands our particular attention.

Οὐδ' ἂν προσήκον, εἰδ' ἂν ἠψάμην χεροῖν *.

Neque allocuta essem, neque attigissem manibus.

In this instance, the verb is in one mood, and the preposition decides for another.

So likewise the postposition :

Εἰ μὴ δι' ἐμὲ, εἰς τὸ φρεῶρ ἐνεπέσεν αὐν.

If it had not been for me, he would have fallen into a well.

And again,

Σὲ γὰρ προσηυδὼν ἔκ' αὐν †.

Te enim non allocutus fuisset.

But the power of the particle is most remarkable in its union with the participle, on which it bestows both a mood and the energy of a verb.

Καὶ μὴν ὀφείλων γ' αὐν, τίνοιμ' αὐτῷ χάριν ‡.

Si quidem deberem, ei persolverem gratias.

* Medæa, Eurip.

† Prometheus, Æsch.

‡ Ib.

From these examples, the primitive construction by prepositions and postpositions comes out with full evidence: the particle not only assumes to itself the determination of the mood, but, in virtue of its original office, though united with inflection, it supercedes it.

Conclusion.

Conclusion.

LET us now consider what might be the progress of a system, by which the particle should be deprived of its primitive function, in order to invest the verb with its own modifications. Such a reform, no doubt, would be slow and gradual; and the reformer would often find himself under the necessity of calling in the well-known particle to the support of his novel institution; and thus, prepositions and postpositions would be so blended with the several forms of inflection, that a mixt construction would become a characteristic of the language.

From such a progress it should follow, that the use of particles would be most frequent in the earliest writings. Was not this actually the case? "Mirum," says the learned Hoogeveen, "quam hac particula " $\gamma\epsilon$ veteres fuerint delectati." The $\rho\alpha$ seems to have rivalled the $\gamma\epsilon$; and it will readily
be

be allowed, that the $\delta\epsilon$, $\tau\epsilon$, $\tau\omicron\iota$ *, were not altogether neglected.

When we are intent on explaining a thought, or enforcing a sentiment, we love to multiply words, and renew the impression. The earnest spirit of the Greeks delighted in these little excesses; the means were ever at hand: in proportion as particles ceased to be necessary parts of speech, they were peculiarly fitted to be the instruments of exaggeration.

Particles had been primary and essential

* $\tau\epsilon$, $\tau\omicron\iota$ —Aristotle (Probl. sect. 19.) compares the power of these conjunctions with that of the middle chord of a harp, which combines the higher and lower, and which he figuratively calls the *conjunction* of sounds, $\tau\omega\upsilon\upsilon\ \phi\theta\omicron\gamma\gamma\omega\upsilon\ \sigma\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\delta\epsilon\sigma\mu\omicron$.

The ingenious fallacy of this metaphor has produced a number of conceits. Hence the $\phi\omega\eta\ \alpha\sigma\eta\mu\omicron$ of ancient grammar; whence “the sign without signification” of modern. Again—“A middle being, sharing the attributes of the higher and of the lower,” is, in other words, the middle chord of a harp. *But the harp was Aristotle’s*—No matter; Hermes dubbed it a zoophyte, and made it his own.

parts of speech ; but at length, as hath been hinted above, came to be applied to less important purposes *. This remains to be explained.

Had the Greeks left their particles in possession of their primitive functions, the constancy in their use, as in simpler languages, would have preserved entire their significations : but, in their shiftings between the character of a principal and an accessory, less attention was paid to their first destination ; and, from signs of ideas, they became, on many occasions, mere objects of sound. To connect the final with the initial vowel ; to strengthen the

* Should we find two, three, or more particles in a sentence, and the sense to be complete without any one of them, on what ground could we attribute an idea to each ? This is what Hoogeveen has undertaken, with some credit, it must be owned, to his ingenuity and erudition. These established, what was it to him, that, like Warburton of learned memory, he proved the reverse of his proposition ?

weaker

weaker movements *, or accelerate the rapid † ; to counteract the excess of polysyllables, and simplify, as it were, the luxury of sound ‡, were their mechanical uses.—

* βῆ ῥ' ἰθὺς τεύκερ—he rush'd on. The ρα (quidem) contributes nothing to the sense ; the sound alone gives a spring to the action.

† ———— ὠσθ' ἵπκ' ————

Ὁς ρα τὴν ρεία δέσσι τιταίνομενος πεδίοιο.

——— magno nisu contendens——— CLARKE.

This was to put the racer to a waggon.

‡ Ὁ δὲ Κυρ' ὅ, τι δέοντο αὐτὸ οἱ παῖδες, διὰ τὴν φιλο-
θωπρίαν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν περὶ πάντ' ἐποίησεν τὸ διαπραττεῖσθαι
καὶ ὁ Ἀγναγὴς δὲ ὅ, τι δέοντο αὐτὸ ὁ Κυρ', ἔδεν ἐδυνατο ἀν-
τιλεγεῖν μὴ καὶ χαρίζεσθαι.

De Instit. Cyri.

Does not the fluency of our own tongue depend, in a great measure, on the balance of our native monosyllables with the polysyllables which we have borrowed from other languages? And is it not from a want of this temperament, in the Latin, that its periods are so often overcharged with sound?—Videt etiam tot tam graves ab amicissimis civitatibus legationes cum publicis auctoritatibus ac testimoniis convenisse.

IN VERREM.

Grandiaque indomiti Ciceronis verba.

PETR. Sat.

Observe the corrective :—Qui non tam me impediunt, quod nobiles sunt, quam adjuvant, quod noti sunt.

IN VERREM.

Every

Every page of the Iliad will furnish proofs of this doctrine; and, in prose, the sweet-tongued Xenophon will be its advocate.

It must seem strange that the Greeks, who multiplied sounds solely to flatter the ear, should not have them in sufficient number to distinguish their ideas: thus they had an α privative, an α enforcive, and a third which was neither the one nor the other. They must have had means of distinction unknown to us: perhaps those means were in the *tones*.

Toni sunt quinque.

1°. &c. &c.



Inque rapit cœtus medios, turbamque sonantem.

I am not qualified to accompany my Author in this curious investigation: to form precise ideas of sounds which I had never

never heard, and to receive them, under this disadvantage, as equivalents to articulations, would be a task to which I feel myself very unequal. It comes more within my compass to consider the Chinese tones merely as the forerunners of language ; or, if I may be indulged in such an idea, as a kind of pre-existing spirits, destined to assume more substantial forms.

— Animæ, quibus altera fato
Corpora debentur.—

Here a new subject opens upon us. Let us imagine the Chinese primitives, with their family tones, passing, as it were, in colonies, and at different periods, into Tartary, Scythia, and the north of Europe. I conceive that the precision requisite to preserve the functions of the tones, would be subject, in these successive migrations, to many interruptions ; and that the consequent indecision of these fugitive signs would throw men on the necessity of substituting

tuting fixed and permanent articulations. I will suppose a predilection for monosyllables to continue in some force, and the primitive to be confirmed in its different significations by the varied insertions and combinations of consonants.

Sed de linguarum similitudine et convenientia, item de origine earum, ac matrice illa primæva lingua, latior spatiosiorque est campus quam qui meo ingenio pertractari possit: magna mirandaque ea in re latere *μυστηρια*, et quæ nemo, nisi omnium prope linguarum peritus, aperire possit, haud nescius sum.

F I N I S.

